

And with a relatively small amount of Federal effort, we can leverage industry efforts and significantly accelerate development and application of green chemistry solutions.

This bill does just that. It takes a sensible, targeted approach to putting some Federal dollars behind green chemistry pollution prevention efforts. It builds on existing programs at a number of Federal agencies to transform those small and scattered efforts into a focused, coordinated, and enhanced national program.

The result of that program should be the generation and dissemination of new ideas and new people, leading to the adoption of more green chemistry practices and the creation of more green chemistry products, by industry.

Now I know some would like this bill to go further. And there's no doubt that there are additional barriers to green chemistry that the government action could help attack. But those government actions are complex and controversial and should be taken up in other bills.

For now, let's take care of first things first. Let's make sure that the government is doing everything possible to ensure that green chemistry research and development is getting the attention it deserves, to ensure that education programs are designed to teach more students and practicing chemists and chemical engineers about green chemistry, and to ensure that new ideas are broadly disseminated.

This is a thoughtful and effective piece of legislation that takes a step we should have taken long ago—making sure that government R&D and education programs promote the kind of chemistry that is in the national interest.

I urge everyone to support Dr. GINGREY's bill.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1215, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL INTEGRATED DROUGHT INFORMATION SYSTEM ACT OF 2006

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5136) to establish a National Integrated Drought Information System within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to improve drought monitoring and forecasting capabilities, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 5136

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **DROUGHT.**—The term “drought” means a deficiency in precipitation—

(A) that leads to a deficiency in surface or subsurface water supplies (including rivers, streams, wetlands, ground water, soil moisture, reservoir supplies, lake levels, and snow pack); and

(B) that causes or may cause—

(i) substantial economic or social impacts; or
(ii) substantial physical damage or injury to individuals, property, or the environment.

(2) **UNDER SECRETARY.**—The term “Under Secretary” means the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

SEC. 3. NIDIS PROGRAM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Under Secretary, through the National Weather Service and other appropriate weather and climate programs in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, shall establish a National Integrated Drought Information System.

(b) **SYSTEM FUNCTIONS.**—The National Integrated Drought Information System shall—

(1) provide an effective drought early warning system that—

(A) is a comprehensive system that collects and integrates information on the key indicators of drought in order to make usable, reliable, and timely drought forecasts and assessments of drought, including assessments of the severity of drought conditions and impacts;

(B) communicates drought forecasts, drought conditions, and drought impacts on an ongoing basis to—

(i) decisionmakers at the Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local levels of government;

(ii) the private sector; and

(iii) the public,

in order to engender better informed and more timely decisions thereby leading to reduced impacts and costs; and

(C) includes timely (where possible real-time) data, information, and products that reflect local, regional, and State differences in drought conditions;

(2) coordinate, and integrate as practicable, Federal research in support of a drought early warning system; and

(3) build upon existing forecasting and assessment programs and partnerships.

(c) **CONSULTATION.**—The Under Secretary shall consult with relevant Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local government agencies, research institutions, and the private sector in the development of the National Integrated Drought Information System.

(d) **COOPERATION FROM OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.**—Each Federal agency shall cooperate as appropriate with the Under Secretary in carrying out this Act.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act—

(1) \$11,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;

(2) \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2008;

(3) \$13,000,000 for fiscal year 2009;

(4) \$14,000,000 for fiscal year 2010;

(5) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2011; and

(6) \$16,000,000 for fiscal year 2012.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 5136, as amended, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, I rise in support of H.R. 5136, the National Integrated Drought Information System Act. I would like to thank Mr. HALL and Mr. UDALL for their leadership on this important legislation. It is truly a bipartisan bill in every way.

Drought is a pernicious disaster. It can creep up on you in the form of pleasantly cloudless days. But once it has arrived it can destroy livelihoods, damage valuable ecosystems, and even threaten human health. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, better known as NOAA, estimates that we lose approximately \$7 billion each year to this slowly emergent but devastating natural disaster. In 2002, drought killed over three-quarters of all of the Christmas tree saplings in my home State of Michigan. In 2005 and 2006, drought left 60 Michigan counties eligible for the U.S. Department of Agriculture relief programs. And my State got off easy.

Since we cannot manufacture more water, our best defense against this creeping threat is knowledge. We must provide clear and accurate warnings of coming droughts so that we can seek appropriate solutions and take appropriate action. Drought information should include enough details to make it useful to the people who work so hard to manage water resources and minimize the effects of drought on our daily lives. The National Integrated Drought Information System Act seeks to provide just that kind of information.

This bill authorizes the National Integrated Drought Information System, or NIDIS, in NOAA. The system would include a comprehensive drought forecasting and monitoring system and the research and development programs to support it. The bill requires NIDIS to build upon existing forecast and monitoring efforts and to do so in broad consultation with relevant Federal, State, tribal, and local agencies, as well as public and private organizations. H.R. 5136 emphasizes the importance of timely, preferably real-time, drought-related information that reflects local and regional differences in drought conditions.

In summary, this bill gives farmers, utilities, forest managers, waterway operators, tourism companies, reservoir managers, and the general public the tools they need to make thoughtful and informed choices about how to limit the impact of drought on our economy, our environment, and our quality of life.

I am pleased to support H.R. 5136, the National Integrated Drought Information System Act. Again, I commend Mr. HALL and Mr. UDALL for this important and bipartisan legislation; and I urge all my colleagues to support H.R. 5136.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to support H.R. 5136 with my colleague from Texas, Judge Hall. H.R. 5136 authorizes NOAA to establish a National Integrated Drought Information System to provide an early warning system to enable State and local governments to take steps to mitigate the effects of drought.

Drought is as devastating to our lives and our economy as other severe weather events. In recent years, the western United States has experienced severe drought conditions. The impacts of drought are costly in both lives and dollars. Drought conditions set the stage for wildfires, crop failures, decline in recreation and tourist activities, impacts on hydropower production, and other harmful effects.

And unlike other severe weather events, Mr. Speaker, drought conditions emerge over a long period of time. Reduced rain and snowfall deplete moisture in the soil, reduce the level of reservoirs, and reduce the flow in rivers. NOAA's current Drought Monitor and drought prediction efforts have provided information to assist with drought planning and mitigation, but I believe we can and should do more.

We need a more refined information system on a seasonal and long-term basis about the severity and persistence of drought conditions to better tailor drought mitigation plans at the regional and local levels. H.R. 5136 will also facilitate the consolidation of drought-related information in one location, providing the public and decision makers at all levels a single point of access for information on drought.

I want to thank Chairman BOEHLERT and Chairman EHLERS for their support of this legislation. In particular, again, I want to mention my good friend, the senior member from Texas, Judge HALL, for his leadership; and I would urge all Members to support this effort to improve our ability to deal with the impacts of drought.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, the cosponsor of this bill, Mr. HALL.

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, of course, in support of the bill to create a National Integrated Drought Information System, and I thank Mr. EHLERS for his very capable handling of the bill. And I thank Mr. UDALL, anybody by the name of Udall stands for honor to me and has for many, many years, for his cosponsorship of the bill.

I am very pleased that the House has agreed to vote on this legislation, because it is important to nearly every State in our union. In our home State of Texas, drought is absolutely decimating crops and the economy. The

total direct losses from drought in Texas are now at \$4.1 billion for the year, and the broader economic damages from this drought bring the price tag to over \$8 billion. My own home district in northeast Texas is experiencing the most severe damage statewide from the drought. In Missouri, farm ponds have been drying up in record numbers; and in Oklahoma the wheat crop rated 58 percent poor to very poor. It is undeniable that droughts have devastating impacts on our society.

While we cannot stop nature, we can do a better job, I think, of predicting, monitoring, and mitigating the problem. Currently, the drought system we have only provides limited help to local water managers and others concerned with drought, because the information is not sufficiently accurate, it is not thorough, or it is not up to date. Our Nation approaches droughts through crisis management, rather than through proactive solutions to manage the problem. The resources that are available to monitor droughts are very general in nature and only offer regional-scale data. Moreover, the data is not circulated in a way that is accessible on the local level by farmers and other interested parties.

The bill before us today addresses these shortcomings. By creating a comprehensive drought information system, we enable our local, State, and national leaders to be more proactive in their approach to droughts. This bill establishes an integrated system and designates NOAA as the lead agency. NOAA will coordinate with local, State, and Federal entities to create a comprehensive network of drought information and provide decision makers with the best tools to manage our resources. NOAA will do this by building a national drought monitoring and forecasting system, create a drought early warning system, provide an interactive drought information delivery system, and designate mechanisms for improved interaction with the public.

The NIDIS initiative will hopefully improve our analysis of conditions, provide us with more accurate seasonal forecasts, and equip us with a better understanding of climate interactions that produce droughts. I am pleased that organizations like the Farm Bureau, the Western States Water Council, and the Western Governors Association have supported this legislation.

Please join me in supporting this vital and important initiative.

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 5136, the National Integrated Drought Information System Act. Drought may seem like something that is easy to detect but hard to do anything about. But that turns out to be wrong on both counts. It's tricky to figure out when a drought is developing; but if one knows a drought is on its way, one can take thoughtful steps to change water use to mitigate drought's often severe economic—and environmental—consequences. So we need to pay more attention to this costly phenomenon, and Mr. HALL's bill, building on existing Fed-

eral efforts, will enable us to improve drought forecasting and monitoring, which will save billions of dollars. While apple growers in my State are doing well today, they faced expensive and debilitating drought just 4 years ago, and will face it again in the future. In fact, in the last 5 years, every State in our Nation has faced drought. This bill will give all of our States the tools they need to reduce the impacts of future droughts.

I am pleased to support H.R. 5136, the National Integrated Drought Information System Act. I commend Mr. HALL and Mr. UDALL for this important and bipartisan legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5136.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5136, the National Integrated Drought Information System Act of 2006.

The National Integrated Drought Information System within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is intended to improve drought monitoring and forecasting capabilities.

Droughts can lead to a deficiency in surface or subsurface water supplies, including rivers, streams, wetlands, ground water, soil moisture, economic or social impact, as well as substantial physical damage or injury to individuals, property, or the environment.

A drought is defined as "a period of abnormally dry weather sufficiently prolonged for the lack of water to cause serious hydrologic imbalance in the affected area." The worst drought in 50 years affected at least 35 States during the long hot summer of 1988. In some areas the lack of rainfall dated back to 1984. In 1988, rainfall totals over the Midwest, Northern Plains, and the Rockies were 50–85 percent below normal. Crops and livestock died and some areas became desert. The economic and environmental impact is clear, and this legislation addresses a direct need.

This legislation establishes the National Integrated Drought Information System in order to provide an effective drought early warning system that acts as a comprehensive system that collects and integrates information on the key indicators of drought. The goal is to make usable, reliable, and timely drought forecasts and assessments of drought, including assessments of the severity of drought conditions and impacts.

Ideally, this information network would communicate drought forecasts, drought conditions, and drought impacts on an ongoing basis to decisionmakers at the Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local levels of government, as well as to the private sector and the public.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

□ 2300

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to urge all of my colleagues to support the National Integrated Drought Information System Act. I urge them to vote for it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SCHWARZ of Michigan). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5136, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOGNIZING THE DEDICATION OF THE EMPLOYEES AT THE STENNIS SPACE CENTER

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 948) recognizing the dedication of the employees at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Stennis Space Center who, during and after Hurricane Katrina's assault on Mississippi, provided shelter and medical care to storm evacuees and logistical support for storm recovery efforts, while effectively maintaining critical facilities at the Center.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 948

Whereas, during Hurricane Katrina, some 3,700 persons (including employees, their immediate and extended families, and members of the general public), sought shelter at the Stennis Space Center;

Whereas the Stennis cafeteria, which normally serves about 175 breakfasts and 600 lunches each day, served 3,000 meals 3 times a day to evacuees, for a period of a week following the storm;

Whereas before, during, and in the immediate aftermath of the storm, the small staff of the Stennis Medical Clinic provided medical care to all who needed it among the evacuees onsite, including some 20 special needs patients, and soon after the storm, the Stennis clinic staff was complemented by medical personnel airlifted from other National Aeronautics and Space Administration Centers;

Whereas, although commercial electrical power was not available to Stennis for 10 days following the storm, electrical power was maintained to all essential buildings through the extensive use of diesel-powered generators and the around the clock efforts of a team of individuals who mechanically maintained those generators and kept them fueled, also enabling the pumps on Stennis' deep-water wells to provide a continuous supply of potable water for drinking, cooking, and sanitation to support the 3,700 people onsite;

Whereas a team of employees in the Stennis rocket propulsion test complex protected the health of all test infrastructure, employing innovative methods to ensure an uninterrupted supply of purge gases to all required facility infrastructure and test hardware, failure of which would have resulted in untold millions of dollars of new costs to clean, purge, and recertify these facilities for Space Shuttle Main Engine and other propulsion system testing;

Whereas for 10 days following the storm, logistical support (including food, water, medical supplies, and personnel exchange) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans was provided via helicopters operating from the Stennis Space Center, along with helicopters, and flight crew and security personnel, from the Marshall Space Flight and Kennedy Space Centers; and

Whereas, immediately following the storm, Stennis Space Center facilitated the use of its property as the site of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Incident Command Center serving a 6-county area along

the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and Stennis served as the central distribution hub for disaster response supplies to those same counties, including, during the nearly 2-months of Federal Emergency Management Agency relief operations at Stennis, distributing more than 7,600,000 gallons of water, 41,000,000 pounds of ice, and 3,500,000 MREs (meals-ready-to-eat) to devastated areas via the Stennis Space Center hub: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives commends the dedication of the employees who stayed behind at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Stennis Space Center, who, during and after Hurricane Katrina's assault on Mississippi, provided shelter and medical care to storm evacuees and logistical support for storm recovery efforts, while effectively maintaining critical facilities at the Center, including Cheryl Bennett, James Bevis, Terry Bordelon, Steve Brettel, Vicki Brown, Bill Brumfield, Kirt Bush, Paul Byrd, Ethan Calder, Marla Carpenter, David Carstens, Jonathan Clemens, Eric Crawford, Cheri Cuevas, John Davenport, David Del Santo, Isaac DeLancey, Jim Freeman, Greg Garrett, Dave Geiger, Stan Gill, Don Griffith, Haynes Haselmaier, Coby Holloway, Gay Irby, Manning "JJ" Jones, Catriona Ladner, David Ladner, Richard Ladner, Stanley Lee, Michelle Logan, Ron Magee, Sharlene Majors, Steve McCord, Pat McCullough, Michael McDaniel, Mike McKinion, Kirk Miller, John Mitchell, Ron Moore, David R. Oakes, Kevin A. Oliver, Alan Phillips, John Nick Pitolo, Allen Price, Porter Pryor, Margaret Roberts, Miguel Rodriguez, Jason Saucier, Dale Sewell, Donald Seymore, Kathy Slade, Sue Smith, David Throckmorton, Karen Vander, John Waquespack, Rodney Wilkinson, Robert Williams, and Michael J. Witt.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HALL) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Res. 948, the resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 948, a resolution recognizing the stalwart NASA employees who performed beyond their day-to-day duties to establish the Stennis Space Center as a logistical emergency center for a large region of the southern Mississippi coast leading up to, during, and in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The Stennis Space Center's runway, which served all of southern Mississippi, as well as the New Orleans area, was cleared within a day. This alone allowed flights with food stuffs, generators and medical supplies to land and also allowed for the medical evacuation of storm survivors.

Nearly 3,700 persons, including employees and their families, as well as

the local public sought refuge at the Stennis facility for weeks following the disaster. Despite this overwhelming tragedy, the employees at the Stennis factory were back to work and excited about their upcoming role in the Vision For Space Exploration.

Excitement about their work and about the future shows the drive and ingenuity of the American people at its best. I want to join in expressing my admiration for those exceptional people who showed the strength and the spirit of America.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to speak in strong support of this resolution, 948, which is a resolution that honors the dedication of the employees of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Stennis Space Center, who stayed at their posts during Hurricane Katrina and protected critical space program assets.

In addition, they provided shelter and medical care to storm evacuees, and they provided logistical support for storm recovery efforts.

Mr. Speaker, as you may recall during late August of last year, Hurricane Katrina severely assaulted southeast Louisiana and the Mississippi coast, resulting in massive damage and the evacuation of large numbers of citizens.

Yet, in the midst of the storm there were countless examples of heroism. One example is the way in which employees of the Stennis Space Center stayed and protected the facility instead of fleeing the area.

These great Americans deserve our thanks and praise for their dedication to working to preserve Stennis during Hurricane Katrina's passage through the region.

Among their accomplishments was the protection of critical test infrastructure at the rocket propulsion test complex. The Stennis Space Center plays an important role in the United States space program. By risking their own lives, these brave individuals ensured that the Center was preserved as a viable facility in spite of the devastation wrought by this Hurricane.

But these individuals are also worthy of recognition for their efforts to assist their fellow citizens who were affected by the storm. During the hurricane, almost 3,700 people took refuge at the center. The employees who remained helped feed, provide medical care and maintain electrical power for all of those on site. The space center also served as the site of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's incident command center for the parts of the Gulf Coast impacted by Katrina.

In short, without the dedication of the employees listed in the resolution before us today, the consequences of Katrina's passage through the region would have been far worse. Mr. Speaker, it is only fitting and proper that we